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WESTERN AMERICANA

"I would that thou mightst ever be
As beautiful as now;
That time might ever leave as free
Thy yet unwritten brow.
I would life were all poetry
To gentle measures set,
That naught but chastened melody
Might dim thine eye of jet:
Nor one discordant note be spoken
Till God the cunning harp hath broken."

Doubtless in the life then beginning so brightly there were sorrow and pain, but never a discordant note sounded from that heart which was early attuned to heavenly melody. Laura Winthrop married the late William Templeton Johnson, of New York, and soon after their marriage, nearly forty years ago, they came to Staten Island, which was always their home. The aptness of Willis's phrase, "child of the sunny

brow," is easily recognized by those who knew Mrs. Johnson. Her sun of youth did not set.

She was a woman of singular sweetness and serenity of nature, of the most catholic sympathy, of high intelligence and of varied and generous accomplishment. Her rural home, surrounded with trees and flowers of her own planting and care, which she knew well and held in a kind of human companionship, was the seat of refined and delightful hospitality. No poorer neighbor but welcomed her tranquil presence and was cheered by her wise and gentle charities. Her tastes and the training of her childhood made her familiar with the best literature and art, and a volume of poems which she published, and the Life and Letters of her brother

ghanies were the boundaries,—now, we look upon them as molehills; then the vast prairies lay in the way, like an endless sea; then the Mississippi, like Jordan, rolled between. But all this is now as nothing. We have jumped the old claim of the Alleghanies, we have crossed the prairies, we have spanned the Mississippi with a dozen splendid bridges, and now the great lines of railroad make but a mouthful of the desert, and digest the Rockies as easily as an ostrich his pebbles and tenpennies. The old fables of magic cars, in which magicians could annihilate space and time, are now dull and tame. Like a dream the desert glides by while a sunrise, a sunset, lights up the measureless waste; we pass some low hills, and the Rockies that loomed before us are circumvented

and flanked; we whirl through a wild cañon, and they are left behind. Have we seen the desert, the mountains? No. It is but a glimpse,—a flat space blackened with prairie fires, a distant view of purple peaks. Few become intimate with this our wonderful frontier, and most people scorn it as an empty, useless, monotonous space, barren as the sea.

We left Cheyenne early in July, under the care of a paymaster of the U.S.A., to visit with him some of the forts and Indian agencies of Wyoming Territory and beyond. Our party consisted of twelve persons, including six ladies and three children. There were two ambulances for us, and three wagons containing all the comforts necessary in camping out for some weeks. It was

EIGHT HUNDRED MILES IN AN AMBULANCE.

BY

LAURA WINTHROP JOHNSON.

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PREFACE.

THESE papers, written by my sister, Mrs. Laura Winthrop Johnson, appeared in *Lippincott's Magazine* in June and July, 1875, and in order to preserve them in a more durable form, they have been reprinted in this little volume.

Those who knew and loved her will value them partly for her sake, and those who had not that privilege, for their own.

ELIZABETH W. WINTHROP.

WEST NEW BRIGHTON,
STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK.

INTRODUCTION.

THE father of Laura Winthrop, long resident at New Haven, was a descendant of Governor Winthrop, of Connecticut, and her mother was a sister of President Woolsey, of Yale College. Theodore Winthrop was her brother. In N. P. Willis's first thin little volume of poems, which he called "Sketches," published in Boston by S. G. Goodrich, in 1827, one of the most melodious and characteristic is addressed to "Laura W., Two Years of Age." It describes a lovely child and forecasts the woman's destiny:

Theodore which she edited, show the deep sincerity of her nature, the thoughtfulness and the flowing grace of her literary power. Her well-ordered life and constant devotion to duty of every kind recalled to those who knew them Goethe's legend, "without haste, without rest." Her heart was a well-spring of ceaseless affection, and her active and well-balanced mind maintained an unwearied interest in all great questions, religious, political, and social, upon which her own judgment was her guide, and upon which her position was calmly independent. She was not of a controversial temperament, but she held no opinion for which she had not an adequate reason, and neither tradition nor affection allured her from quiet fidelity to her conscience.

In this community she was always in the van of good works, and her comprehensive sympathy enlarged continually the circle of her friends. In all the amenities of social intercourse she was untiring, and her life, as parent, friend, and citizen, was full of beneficent activity and rounded with content. With gentle dignity and tender assiduity, of a happy temperament and in rosy health, loving and beloved, she greeted the inexorable advance of years and smilingly held Time at bay. Although past sixty she still had the aspect of her blooming prime. The music of the poet's salutation to the child of two years often murmured in the memory of those who saw in the mother and grandmother the child's "sunny brow," still smooth and fair. What gift of God

more gracious could those who loved her ask than that in the untouched fulness of beautiful life and in the domestic heaven of her home she should close her eyes in this world suddenly and forever?

"My sprightly neighbor, gone before
To that unknown and silent shore,
Shall we not meet as heretofore,
Some summer morning?

"When from thy cheerful eyes a ray
Hath struck a bliss upon the day,—
A bliss that would not go away,—
A sweet forewarning."

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS.

West New Brighton,
Staten Island, New York.
March 27, 1889.

EIGHT HUNDRED MILES
IN AN
AMBULANCE.

THE United States is the only country in the world that has its frontier in the middle. The Great American Desert, stretching from the Canadas to the Gulf in a belt nearly a thousand miles in breadth, is now the true divide between the East and the West; and as if that were not enough, it is backed by the long ranges of the Rockies, which, though they flatten out and break down here and there, have yet quite enough of "sassy country" to make a very respectable barrier. A century ago the Alle-

promised that we should see wonders, and should go where no white women had ever been before. At 6.45 on a beautiful morning, with a fresh breeze blowing over the desert, the party set forth, looking forward with delight to a continuous picnic a month long. Soon every vestige of human habitation disappeared, and we were alone in the midst of one of the loneliest lands in the world. Sahara itself, that bugbear of childhood, could not be much more desert than this. Fort Laramie, distant nearly one hundred miles, two long days' journey towards the north, was our first point of destination. Over ridge after ridge of the vast rolling plains, clothed with thin brown grass, we rode: no other vegetation was visible but the prickly pear, white thistle, and

yucca, or Spanish bayonet,—stiff, gray, stern plants, suited to the stony, arid soil. The road was good, the vehicle comfortable, the air sweet and cool; along the many ruts in the sand grew long rows of sunflowers, which fill every trail on the plains for hundreds of miles and give a little color to the colorless scene. The season of flowers was nearly over in that rainless country, but a few still lingered, and among them was the familiar larkspur, growing wild. At first the long low hills seemed lonely as graves, but we soon found there was not a rod of ground but had its inhabitants. Everywhere something was moving, some little beast, bird, or insect: larks sang and perked about on the stones; prairie-birds twittered; gophers (pretty creatures with feathery tails and

leopard spots) slid rapidly to their holes; prairie-dogs sat like sentinels upon their mounds and barked like angry puppies; great pink-and-gray grasshoppers, so fat that they could hardly waddle, indulged their voracity; and brown crickets and butterflies were seen on every side. An antelope disappears in the distance; a brigand-like horseman rides up and asks the way. He is a suspicious-looking character, and pistols are cocked. We have not our full escort, and are there not greenbacks among us? But he too disappears in the distance. Is his band lurking among those hills? We like to think so.

About fifteen miles up and down brought us to our first ranch, on Pole Creek, a dry stream, with osiers, shrubs, and weeds in its bed. It was pleasant

to see something green, even so little, and something human, though only a long, low, whitewashed cabin; but this touch of life did not make much impression upon the wilderness, save to make it seem wilder. A plover was flying about, "crying and calling;" a large flock of cow-buntings, our old acquaintances, followed the cattle that grazed in the bed of the stream. We gathered twenty species of flowers here, among them a tiny scarlet mallow and a white œnothera or evening primrose. In the three rooms of the ranch there was refreshment to be found, doubtless of a spirituous nature, but we watered our mules and went on. It was ten miles farther before we came to our next ranch, so thinly settled is the country. Being time for our noonday rest, we

took refuge from the fierce heat and glare of the desert in the clean rooms of Mrs. Fagin, dined on our own provisions, and drank the excellent milk she brought us.

Still on the ambulances rolled, over the hot, high table-land, till, about five o'clock, we saw some strange yellow bluffs before us, and descended into the valley of the Chug, a clear stream flowing through a fringe of willow, box-elder (a species of maple), and the cotton-wood poplar. Here was Kelly's ranch, a large one, close by which we were to camp for the night. We found there Lieutenant F—— and an escort of twenty horse, which had been sent to meet us from Fort Laramie. They had our tents pitched for us, and everything ready. A wild, lonely place was this

green valley, with its fantastic, water-worn bluffs that bore a grotesque resemblance to turtles, seals, and other great sea-beasts, and it was delightful to see trees again and to hear the sound of running water. The children at once pulled off shoes and stockings and began to paddle in the stream, and some of the elders followed. It was arranged that we should have supper and breakfast in the ranch, which was a sort of tavern, and we found the supper quite good enough for hungry people, despite the odor of onions that pervades the hearths and homes of this region.

Kelly was a tall, dark, slender man, with large melancholy eyes, soft, but never meeting you quite frankly,—eyes into which you could not look very far. It is not easy for us to understand the

life of this man and his "pard," with their Indian wives and half-breed children, fifty miles from anywhere; yet they seemed very busy and comfortable. He was asked how he liked it. "It's rather lonesome," he replied. He was a man of few words, and went about silently in carpet slippers, waiting on us at table. No one else appeared, but we had glimpses of the Indian women in the kitchen preparing the meal. After supper we all sat down on buffalo robes spread upon the dewless grass, while the sun went down in glory and the twilight gathered in the sky, realizing that we were camping out for the first time in our lives, and having a delicious sense of adventure, a first sip of the wine of the wilds. "Early to bed and early to rise" is the rule in camp, and so when

the stars came out we turned in. As soon as the sun set another climate reigned over the Plains. The nights are always cool, dry, and delicious, and fifty miles of ambulance-travelling is a good preparation for sleep. Yet when all was still I came out to look at the night, for everything was so strange and new that sleep at first would not come. The scene was wild enough. The twilight still glimmered faintly; the sky was thick with stars of a brightness never seen in more humid air; the Milky Way was like a fair white cloud; the fantastic bluffs looked stranger than ever against the pale green west; and the splendid comet was plunging straight down into the Turtle's mouth. A light from the blacksmith's forge glowed upon the buildings, tents, and low trees; in

the stillness the hammer rang out loud, and there was a low murmur of voices from the officers' tent. In the middle of the night we were wakened by hearing the galloping of a horse, perhaps a passing traveller, and when it ceased a new sound came to our ears, the barking and whining of wolves.

The next morning we were off at six. Our road lay in the green valley of the Chugwater, under the pale bluffs, channelled and seamed by the rains into strange shapes. We never tired of watching our train as it wound up and down, the white-covered wagons with red wheels and blue bodies, the horsemen loping along, picturesquely dressed, with broad hats, large boots, blue trousers, and shirts of every color. Their riding was admirable, and as they ap-

peared and disappeared among the trees or behind some rising ground the effect was always picturesque. The valley was charming after so much desert, for it was long since we had seen a good tree. The principal one in Cheyenne was not larger than a lilac-bush, and had to be kept wrapped in wet towels. The light vivid tints of the box-elder contrasted well with the silvery willows and cotton-woods, and still better with the long rows of sage-brush in the foreground and the yellowish cliffs behind. A high, singular butte called Chimney Rock was conspicuous for many miles, also a long one called the Table. There were several ranches in the valley and many splendid cattle.

About ten o'clock we stopped at Colonel Bullock's ranch. Not a soul

within: all hands were gone off to a "rounding out," or branding of cattle, —a wild scene, they say, and worth seeing. The herders, rough men with shaggy hair and wild, staring eyes, in butternut trousers stuffed into great rough boots, drive the cattle together, a mass of tossing horns and hoofs, and brand the names of their several owners upon them,—a work full of excitement and not unattended with peril. We looked curiously about the ranch, which resembled others we had seen: a log house, furnished with the necessaries of life, with buffalo skins and arms in plenty lying about, and some hanging shelves containing a number of very good books, including a classical dictionary. About the middle of the day we rested a few minutes at Owen's ranch,

where lived a handsome blond young man with a nice white wife. His corral was surrounded with a wall of neat masonry, instead of the usual crooked posts. Here were Chug Springs, the head of a branch stream, and from thence we went over what we were told was the toughest divide in the whole country. The heat was scorching over the dreary, dusty wastes of sand and alkali, where hardly the cactus could find sustenance. This was our first glimpse of the Mauvaises Terres, the alkali-lands, which turn up their white linings here and there, but do not quite prevail on this side the Platte. The Black Hills of Wyoming, with their dark jagged outlines, gave life to the backward view, and when they were concealed Laramie Peak appeared on

the left, a mountain of noble form and color. At Eagle's Nest the yellow bluffs again started up, opening with a striking gate-way through which a fine picture of the blue peak showed itself down a dry valley, a chimney rock in the foreground giving emphasis to the view. The bluffs disappeared, and there was again the desert, and always the desert, with its heat and dust. Our four shining black mules went bravely on, however, and at five o'clock we came in sight of Fort Laramie, a little brown spot far away over the plain. In less than an hour we arrived at the post in a whirlwind of dust.

We were expected, for had we not followed the telegraph-wires? Utter strangers as we were, at once we were made to feel at home, and everything

was done for the comfort of the weary travellers. A description of this fort will do for all the rest, though this is one of the oldest, largest, and most important posts. There is no sort of fortification whatever; a large parade-ground, nearly destitute of grass and planted with half-dead trees, is surrounded by the barracks and quarters, neat, low buildings, and beyond, at one end, are the ordnance and sutler's stores. A hospital and a large old barrack called Bedlam tower above the rest; more buildings straggle away towards the Laramie River, where there is a bridge. The position commands the river and bluffs. No grass, no gardens, no irrigation, no vegetables nor anything green is here. One good-sized cottonwood, perhaps coeval with

the post, seemed as much of a veteran as the old artilleryman, a character always pointed out to strangers, who has lived at the post ever since it was a post, and is distinguished as the ugliest man there. His seamed and scarred face looks as if it had been through many storms and many Indian fights. Another distinguished character is the pet elk, a privileged person, who abuses his privileges by walking into houses and eating up hats, shoes, window-curtains, toys,—anything to satisfy his voracious appetite.

On the 14th of July we were off for Fort Fetterman. To our surprise the morning was delicious, though the mercury at noon the day before had ranged at over 100° in the shade. Laramie Peak was still in sight, and was so, in

fact, for weeks, till upon nearer acquaintance the fine old mountain became a friend for life. The country was still wilder and lonelier than that we had seen, and not a single habitation lay upon our route. All had been burnt by the Indians. We followed at some distance the right bank of the North Platte, all day over a barren country of low hills and scattered pines, bounded by a range of whitish bluffs beyond the river. We halted a few moments at Warm Spring, where a clear basin of tepid water bubbled and boiled and overflowed into a good-sized brook. Then on to Big Bitter Cottonwood, where we had our nooning among the trees on the wide sandy bed of the stream, which had sunk under ground for many miles, as is the custom of rivers here. It

gushed forth near by, however, in copious springs, which gave us abundance of water and supported quite a luxuriant growth of vegetation. Wild currants delighted the children, clematis twined its white blossoms among the scarlet buffalo-berries, graceful osiers waved in the wind, and wild flowers were plentiful. It was a pleasant place among the wilds, and had perhaps been a happy home, for here were the ruins of a ranch burnt by the Indians. Here, too, were other ruins,—of beaver-dams built by the first settlers of all.

Leaving this creek we went on to Little Bitter Cottonwood, a similar dry creek, but smaller and more lightly timbered. Then passing some more low hills with a few pines, always with the Platte on the right and Laramie Peak

on the left, we crossed a long hill or divide called Bull Bend, and descended into the fine valley of Horseshoe Creek. We were now upon the old Overland Route to California, once so much travelled, but now deserted for the railroad. Here was the abode of Jack Slade, one of the station-masters on that famous stage-road,—a man of bad reputation, and more than suspected of having been a freebooter and even a murderer. This did not prevent his station from being one of the best on the road, his horses always good, his meals easily bolted. Of him and of his band you may read the history in Mark Twain's "Roughing It." After the railroad was finished the Indians descended upon these lonely ranches in the valley of the Platte, now left out in the cold; they attacked

Slade's house one morning in force, and there was a savage fight. Jack and his band succeeded in driving them off, but the next day the Indians returned in larger numbers, killed some of the whites, and burnt the ranch. We next hear of Jack Slade in Montana, where he took to his old trade again. The Vigilants thought they must "draw the line somewhere," so they drew it at Jack Slade. He escaped several times the threatened vengeance, saved by the intercession of his wife, a faithful and determined woman, but he did not mend his ways. One day when she was absent they took him and hung him to a tree. Strange to say, he did not "die game." His wife came galloping in on the scene, but it was too late: all was over for Jack Slade.

It was strange and interesting to hear this wild story in the very spot where it happened,—to see the blackened ruins and the graves of those who fell in that long day's struggle, the lonely bluffs that once looked down on Jack Slade's ranch and echoed to the trot of his famous teams. The creek here makes a wide bend, leaving a fertile intervale where thousands of cattle could graze; the trees are always green, the river never dry. About three o'clock we came to our camping-ground among the timber on the clear stream, over against the inevitable bluffs. Fire had destroyed some of the finest trees, and on the great black trunks sat flocks of chattering blackbirds; the little chickadee's familiar note was heard, and a crane flew away with his long legs behind

him, just as he looks on a Japanese tray. The scene of encamping is ever new and delightful. The soldiers are busy in pitching tents, unloading wagons, and gathering wood; horses and mules are whinnying, rolling, and drinking; Jeff, the black cook, is kindling a fire in his stove; children are running about, and groups in bright colors are making, unconsciously, all sorts of charming effects among the white wagons and green trees.

We spread our blankets in the shade and dream. The children's voices sound pleasantly. They are bathing in a still pool which the eddy makes behind the bushes, though the cool clear water is rushing down fast from Laramie Peak. It seems as if we were almost at the world's end, so lonely is the place, but

there is nothing to fear. Indians will not attack so large a party as ours. A strong wind rises and sways the willows, making the wild scene wilder than ever; a blood-red sunset flames from the horizon to the upper sky; and as it darkens, and the wolves begin to howl, we think of Jack Slade and all the wild stories we have heard of robbers and fights and Indian massacres.

At reveille we all started up. It was 4.30 A.M. Had we slept? We knew not. All had been blankets and—blank. A pail of water and a tin basin, a little "Colgate" for cosmetic, on went the warm flannels, and we were ready by five o'clock for breakfast in the dining-tent. Here we had camp-stools and tables, and upon the latter coffee, beef-steaks, fried potatoes, preserves, and

olives. Though all our meals had to be very much alike, they were always excellent and did credit to the commissariat. As Carlyle remarks, "Honor be to the man who cans! He is Canning, König, or King!" How people lived here before the days of canned vegetables it is hard to imagine. Before six we were packed and off again. The morning ride in the cool invigorating air before the heat of the day came on was the most delightful of our experiences.

Winding first through a pass between hills of sandstone and rubble, where moss-agates are found (an excellent place for an ambush), we followed the same sort of country as before over a succession of small creeks and divides. These table-lands were always barren

and covered with the same thin gray vegetation, but sometimes adorned with a few flowers,—the beautiful agemone or prickly poppy, with its blue-green leaves, large white petals, and crown of golden stamens; the pretty fragrant abronia, and the white œnothera. A deep pink convolvulus was common, which grew upon a bush, not on a vine, and was a large and thrifty plant. Sage and wormwood were seen everywhere, and on the streams we found larkspur, aconite, little white daisies and lungwort, lupines, and the ever-present sunflower. But usually all was barren,—barren hills, barren valleys, barren plains. Sometimes we came upon tracts of buffalo-grass, a thin, low, wiry grass that grows in small tufts, and does not look as if there were any nourishment in it, but is

said to be more fattening than corn. Our animals ate it with avidity. Was not all this dreary waste wearily monotonous and tame? Monotonous, yes; but no more tame than the sea is tame. We sailed along day after day over the land-waves as on a voyage. To ride over those lonely divides in the fresh morning air made us feel as if we had breakfasted on flying-fish. We felt what Shelley sings of the power of "all waste and solitary places;" we felt their boundlessness, their freedom, their wild flavor; we were penetrated with their solemn beauty. Here the eyesight is clearer, the mind is brighter, the observation is quickened: every animal, insect, and bird makes its distinct impression, every object its mark. There is something on the Plains that cannot be found else-

where,—something which can be felt better than described,—something you must go there to find.

Under the superb blue sky we went on and on, over a country all tops and bottoms, some of the bottoms with wet creeks, most of them with dry. We lunched at a pretty creek, a wet one, called La Bonté (it is charming to find the soft French and Spanish names so common here), a pleasant timbered stream, and a great place for Indian massacres. The ruins of the ranches once standing in this valley are still to be seen, and the graves of a lieutenant and twenty-four soldiers killed by the Indians many years ago.

The afternoon sun blazed upon the low hills, mere heaps of rubble like old moraines, where sometimes a little red

sandstone cropped out and gave the wearied eyes a change of color. Always the noble vault of sky, the flying cloud-shadows, the Laramie range with its torn outlines softened by distance, which looked so near, yet was so far. Constantly we said, "How like to Arabia or Palestine!" We only asked for camels to make the resemblance perfect. The gray sage-brush tinted the long, low, solemn hills like the olives of Judæa; the distant bluffs looked like ruined cities; the mirage was our Dead Sea. The cattle- and sheep-farmers follow the same business as Abraham and Isaac, and are as sharp in their dealings as Jacob of old. The Indians are our Bedouins, and like them they "fold their tents and silently steal." Once in looking back the illusion was perfect.

The Sea of Galilee was behind us, and upon its banks stood the old cities of Capernaum and Nazareth, towered and walled and gray. We had not then seen the verses of Joaquin Miller, in which he expresses the same idea in better words,—in words of prophecy.

After a long hot ride we were glad to see the flag waving over Fort Fetterman, though the signs of human habitation did not seem to belong there. The post is not as large as Fort Laramie, but otherwise as like it as one pea to another, and stands in the same way at the junction of a stream (La Prèle) with the Platte, upon a bluff that commands the two rivers. The view from thence at the moment of sunset was impressive,—of the two streams, bordered with green, and the vast country beyond

the Platte, more barren and alkaline even than the nearer side.

At the fort we found the same kindness and hospitality as at Laramie. Our quarters were in a large empty house, the abode of the commanding officer of the post, then absent with his family, where we were made very comfortable. Our meals were provided at other officers' quarters, and everything was done for our entertainment. Our rooms were on the ground floor, and we were startled at reveille to see five or six dogs leap in at the open windows and run about the floor. Just awakened, we hardly knew in the dim light what manner of wild beasts they might be. Afterwards we heard that this was the custom in the family. A pet porcupine in the house amused us very much.

He was a grotesque little creature, and very tame and affectionate, following the servant about like a little dog and fondling her feet. His quills had been drawn or shed, but they were beginning to grow again, like pin-feathers.

In this quiet, kindly little post nothing seems ever to happen, but the air is full of Indian rumors. A Gatling gun, pointed at the universe, seemed to promise the enemy a sharp reception if a scare ever came. This diabolical little mitrailleuse would not be pleasant to look upon as it ground out grim death in such a matter-of-fact way. A few days were very agreeably spent at Fetterman (of which the very name tells of Indian murders), and there we found courteous, educated men and gracious, lovely women. It was wonderful what

elegant little entertainments they managed to give us in this far-away outpost of civilization.

On Saturday, July 18, we set out to return to Fort Laramie. The route was the same, and nothing occurred to vary it save the little incidents, not worth telling, which yet give the real charm to a journey. Our party was made still larger by the addition of some mounted traders and their train of wagons. It was always pleasant to see them, for there are no such riders as upon the frontier, where every one sits easily and perfectly, and the large boots and the sombreros make every man a picture. Again we were on La Bonté at noon, on Horseshoe at night. We begin to feel at home here, and it is truly a place to like, with its many bird-voices and

rushing breezes. We encamp; the soldiers laugh and sing; a simple joke seems to go a great way; one lassos another, and all roar when he misses. The steam of cooking rises on the air; we feel again the charm of camp-life, and our sleep is sweet in the night. Once more the morning red flashes upon the sky, then changes to yellow and to gray. Clouds come over, the roaring wind that always blows at Horseshoe scatters the limbs from the burnt trees, but it will not rain. No such luck, but it will be cool and pleasant for our journey. Passing by the ruins of Jack Slade's ranch, the long curve of the Horseshoe, the bluffs and the plains, we are once more at Fort Laramie and sitting in the cool evening air upon the friendly veranda

of Major W——, hearing the band play.

Our stay at the post was short, but we had time to attend a charming little ball given us by the officers and to drive along the really pretty banks of the Laramie. And now we were to leave them once more for a wilder country still, the Indian Territory itself, and to visit Red Cloud and Spotted Tail agencies, the names of which alone gave us a sense of adventure and of nearness to savage life. Our escort was increased to fifty men, under command of Captain S—— and two lieutenants, and we took along with us a large supply-train for the agencies of about thirty wagons, so that, numbering the teamsters and drivers, our party was at least one hundred strong.

Fording the Platte, a large deep stream, was a little unpleasant to us novices, for we tumbled about a great deal over the stones in the river-bed, and felt as if an upset was quite possible. The crossing is sometimes dangerous, and there is a rope-ferry, but to-day the water was low and fordable with ease. We are now no longer in the United States, but in the Indian country. No ladies have ever taken this journey before except the wives of the agents, who have been there but a few weeks. In fact, these agencies were only established a short time ago, and the Indians are not yet very friendly to them. The country was wilder, vaster, and more barren than ever, with fewer streams and broader divides. Tantalizing showers flying across the distant

mountains did not cool the dry, hot air. At noon we began to see a long detached ridge, an advanced post of the Rockies, called Rawhide Peak, and at night we camped on Rawhide Creek, a rather desolate stream, without timber, bordered only with shrubs and weeds. It seemed cheerful, however, upon its stony banks with such a gay crowd as we had, so many soldiers and other people about, with their wagons, horses, mules, tents, and mess-chests. But a great black cloud was rising over Rawhide Peak, and just as we were seated comfortably at dinner down came the whirlwind upon us, nearly blew over our tent, and covered our dinner with a thick coating of the dust of the Plains. Beds, clothing, hair, mouths, noses were full of the fine gray powder. What if our

dinner was spoiled? 'Twas but the fortune of war. The blow was soon over, and we managed to dine off the scraps, so as not to go quite hungry to bed. The rain poured down for five minutes and laid the dust when too late, the sky cleared, and a wonderful rainbow, three deep, appeared in the east. The sunset was one not to be forgotten. The deep blue-black of Rawhide Peak, cut sharp by the clear gleaming apricot sky, and above the flying clouds, wavered and pulsed with color and flame. We watched them by the camp-fire till twilight faded and moon and stars shone with desert brilliancy. Shaking the dust from our beds as a testimony against the spiteful spirits of Rawhide Peak, we slept with our usual profundity. Always, however, before bedtime we had

to go through the little ceremony of removing the burs from our clothing, for every plant in this country seems to have a bur or a tick-seed, and we found a new one in every camp. Sometimes they were arrows or needles an inch long, sometimes triangles with sharp corners, sometimes little spiked balls, sometimes long bags with prongs. There was no end to their number and variety, and they grew to be one of our studies.

After the first wrench of waking, the morning, from dawn to sunrise, was always beautiful. It amused us while dressing to watch the ears of the mules moving against the pale yellow sky and the men, like black ghosts, stealing about. We crossed a wide, noble mesa clothed with buffalo-grass: there was no heat, no dust, and the long caravan be-

fore us made, as usual, a moving picture. The desert looked more like Palestine than ever, with the low buttes and sandhills yellow in the distance. "Towered cities called us then," yet when we reached them we found but desolation, "and the fox looked out of the window." The queer little horned frogs, lizards, rattlesnakes, and coyotes were the sole inhabitants. "Them sandhills," we were told, "tracks across the country for a thousand mile."

Our next halt was at Niobrara Creek, called also L'eau qui court and Running Water. These three names (all with the same meaning) are far prettier than the place. Not a stick of timber, not a shrub, can be seen upon its banks. There was a flowing stream, a wide meadow, full of what looked like pink

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clover, but was only a bitter weed, and behind and before us the desert, in which our lively little camp was the only life to be seen. We soon found that we were not beyond the power of the spirits of Rawhide Peak. "O'er the far blue mountain" came the whirlwind punctually at dinner-time, but, fortunately, we had been somewhat beforehand with it and had already stowed away our soup safely. The dust could not get at the champagne which we drank in honor of a wedding anniversary. Lighting our camp-fire, we forgot all else in listening to stories of the war and its heroic life; of Indian scares and massacres; of handfuls of men defending themselves behind their dead horses and driving back the foe; of brave young fellows lying cold and

mutilated upon the Plains; of freezing storms of snow and hail; and of the many hair-breadth 'scapes and perils of the wilderness, till we all became Desdemonas of the hour. We felt that though we were probably as safe as ever in our lives, yet there were possibilities that gave our position just enough spice of danger to be exciting.

Looking out during the night I saw a misshapen gibbous moon of a strange green-cheese color, setting between the four legs of a mule, whose body made an arched frame for it. The effect was most grotesque. A ride on horseback next morning over the fresh breezy divide was a charming change from the monotonous 'bus. How the larks sang for us on that bright morning, and coyotes and blackbirds with white wings

fled away before us! A little after noon we struck the sources of the White River, pleasant springs on a hill-side, bubbling forth among the first trees we had seen since we left the Laramie. Then we descended into a fine shady valley; all our old friends were there in thickets,—the box-elder, willow, birch, and cottonwood, the alder, osier, and wild cherry, currant, gooseberry, buffalo-berry, and clematis. As we went on, brushing through the thick foliage, the hills on either side became higher and grew into bastions, castles, donjon-keeps, and fantastic clustered chimneys, like Scott's description of the valley of St. John. The river went circling about through the intervale, so that we had to cross it constantly upon the little bridges made during the White River expedi-

tion in the February before. It was pleasant thus to wind along under the overarching boughs, coming frequently upon some pretty reach of the stream where we could watch the cavalcade crossing, dashing out from under the bushes or watering the horses, while the heavy white-topped wagons plunged into the water and slowly mounted the opposite bank. In the distance the men were scouring the hill-sides for deer, and perhaps looking out a little for Indians also. We went on in military order, with mounted pickets in advance, in the rear, and on both sides; not that there was any danger, but an Indian is an inscrutable mystery, a wolf on two legs, and it is not easy to know what he may do.

The valley grew wider and spread into

a great bare plain, still bordered with pine-sprinkled bluffs, through which the river dodged about without any apparent reason, and wherever it went the trees followed. Before we came in sight of the agency we were met by several officers and traders, glad of a little change of society. They conducted us to our camp on a pleasant rising ground about a mile from the agency, overlooking the cavalry and infantry camps in front and rear. It is a wild, lonely, fascinating place, this White River Valley, shut out from the world by its castled bluffs, though should we climb them we should only find another desert. We dined under a bower of pine boughs beside our tents that served for a parlor. In the evening everybody called to see us, including the only two

ladies in the place, wives of the traders, who looked too delicate to bear the hardships of the wilderness. Perhaps the hardships are not great, but the loneliness must be terrible in the long, long winters.

The next day we drove over to the agency, eager to see the Indian dance that had been promised us. The place consists of several government and private buildings surrounded by a stockade. When we arrived a large number of Indians were already there, mostly squaws and children, mounted on ponies and dressed in their gayest blankets and embroideries. Their ponies are very pretty, small, gracefully-formed horses, not clumsy as we had expected. The mantles of the squaws were of deer-skin, but covered entirely with beads,

the groundwork of deep sky-blue ones, with gay stiff figures in brilliant colors. They were gracefully cut, somewhat like a "dolman," and had a rich, gorgeous effect in the crowd. Most of them wore necklaces of "thaqua"—the quill-like white shell which is brought from the Pacific, and serves them for small change—and heavy ear-rings of the same shells a quarter of a yard long. Their ears were slit from top to bottom to hold these great ear-rings; sometimes they wore two pairs, with heavy mother-of-pearl shells at the end of each. The necklaces covered the whole chest, like a bib or a breastplate. The parting of their long black hair was painted red, and their cheeks daubed with red, yellow, and blue. Most of them had flat faces and flat noses; very few were in

the least good-looking. Hundreds were waiting outside the gates, among them some half-breed boys.

Soon the braves began to come in. With a glass we could see great numbers of them winding out of the hills from their hidden camps, well mounted and flashing with bright arms and gay trappings. It was a strange, wonderful scene of motion and color, with the gray, unchangeable desert and the pale walls of the buttes for a background. The men came crowding, tearing in at a great pace, and soon we could see the dancing-party dashing along in all their feathers and war-paint, an inconceivably wild, savage cavalcade. On they rushed, beating a great drum in solemn cadence, shouting, blowing fifes, and firing their pieces into the air. There was as much

noise as on a Fourth of July. We had to stand back to let them pass, for there was a scene of the wildest confusion as they all, horse and foot, rushed pell-mell into the stockade, followed closely by the squaws and children on their spirited ponies. It was a piece of *real* savage life. Following after them, we went up into the second story of the agent's house, where we could look down upon the barbaric crowd. The squaws made a brilliant circle all round the inside of the enclosure, gay as a terrace of flowers. About fifteen men squatted round the big drum, which must have been five or six feet in diameter, and began a weird song, interspersed with grunts and yells. It had a measured cadence, but not a semblance of music. Meanwhile the braves who were to join in the dance

formed themselves into two circles of about thirty men each, and the rest sat upon their horses, looking imperturbable. The principal chiefs did not join in the dance, and two or three came up into the room where we were.

The dresses of the dancers were varied and splendid. Most of them wore the usual trousers or Indian leggings of blue cloth, cut off below the hips, with another cloth for the loins, and those that had no trousers had their legs painted. Embroidered blankets of blue or red cloth, moccasins, belts, tobacco-pouches, and cases for scalping-knives, all beaded, with glittering arms and tomahawks, hung about them everywhere, but the chief piece of finery was the war-bonnet, and a tremendous show it made. A turban of fur or scarlet

cloth went round the head, adorned with tall eagles' feathers in a crown, such as we see upon the wooden figures before cigar-shops, and from this hung down a long piece of scarlet cloth about a quarter of a yard wide, and long enough to trail on the ground a yard or two behind. This was ornamented with a fringe of eagles' feathers on each edge, like the backbone of a fish, and as it waved about nothing could be more superb. The savage dandies were evidently proud of their appearance, and to say that they were "got up regardless of expense" was simply a fact, for their wardrobes must have cost considerable sums,—half a dozen ponies at least. Standing in a circle, they danced, shouting and singing. It was a slow measured step, but no more like dancing than

their singing was like singing. Another gorgeous circle was formed on the other side of the stockade, and both parties kept up this weird dance with great gravity. One young fellow laughed, twisted about, and conducted himself a little like a harlequin. All held the hands upon the haunches and bent forward. This was called an Omaha dance. After a while all stopped dancing, and one of the squad of chiefs rode into the circle and began to relate his experience, while at every pause the emphasis was given by a strange roll of the drum. He was telling some savage exploit, the interpreter said, against the Pawnees. The crowd applauded with wild grunts and savage cries. Then the circle rose and danced again, then another chief spoke, and so on, some on foot and some

on horseback, till one whom we had selected as the most grotesque horror of the whole came into the circle. He was painted all over a greenish rhubarb color, like a stagnant pool; his chin was blue, his face was streaked with red. He wore a very short shirt of deerskin with a very deep fringe of black horse-hair. Though *sans culotte*, his legs were painted with red and blue hands on the rhubarb ground; all over his horse were these red and blue hands and red stripes, and the beast had a red mane and tail. This villain, who had a most appropriate name, unmentionable to ears polite, completed his charms with a great pair of blue goggles. The red stripes upon his horse signified how many horses he had taken; the red hands, the number of prisoners.

The names of these fellows, as translated for us by the interpreter, were odd enough. Besides the great chiefs, Red Cloud and Spotted Tail, there were Red Dog, Red Leaf, Red Horse, Little Wound, White Crane Walking, Man Afraid of (Losing) his Horses, Crow that don't like Water, Man who Sings in the Long Grass, Turkey Legs, Lone Horn, Sitting Bull, Spider, Yellow Bear, Blue Horse, Two Strike, White Crow, Long John, Friday, Face, Hand, Man that Sleeps under the Water, Man that Looks the Sun Blind, Wish, Three Bears, Blue Tomahawk, White Thunder, etc., etc. These Indians were Sioux of the wildest kind, about as savage as any there are. Our lives were in their hands, and they were well mounted and well armed. Still, we were safe enough so near the

camp, for they are very prudent and never attack unless they are five to one. Besides, they have rations given them every ten days by government, and they don't quarrel much with their bread and butter. In fact, they are paupers, and we are all taxed to support them and the army, which is more than necessary as a police to keep them in order. When the dance was half over about twenty soldiers came into the gate and produced quite a panic among the squaws and children, who shrieked with terror and rushed towards the larger gate. The braves did not think it the correct thing to show any fear.

One might live a thousand years at the East and never see anything so wonderful as this dance; it is impossible to give a true idea of its life and

color. It was the real thing, not a theatrical or Cooperesque imitation. All was new to us, and we were probably as new and strange to most of our entertainers. Many crowded round us with evident curiosity, desiring to shake hands with us and to say "How? Kola?" (friend). Those who could speak a few words of English plied us with questions as to our ages, the relationships that existed between us, whose squaws the ladies were, and whose were the little blond-haired children. Certain articles of finery seemed to be greatly valued among them, such as red, white, and blue umbrellas, like those used as signs in our cities; patchwork and Marseilles quilts; orange shirts and green dresses; pink and pearl shells; little bells; small mirrors; and beads

about four inches long made of fine pipe-clay. These beads cost a dollar and a half each, and are made especially for them in one place in Massachusetts. They wear them in rows of twenty or thirty on the breast, making quite an expensive necklace.

The dance lasted, perhaps, two hours. After all were tired presents were brought and laid upon the ground, consisting of hard-tack, calico, etc. All through the dance the wind was blowing the dust about in clouds, and the Indians held their blankets and fans of eagles' feathers to their eyes. Several wore blue goggles,—we knew not whether for use or beauty.

We remained four days at Red Cloud, where the officers and traders did everything they could to make it pleasant for

us. Our stay was prolonged by waiting for the Sun Dance, a sort of movable summer festival, which was expected to begin at any moment. The weather was cool, the situation of our little camp pretty and pleasant. One of our amusements was to visit the trader's store, inspect the odd collection of Indian goods, and make purchases for gifts. We bought gay calicoes, cloth, mirrors, bells, umbrellas, paint, and shells. Returning one day to camp we met old Red Cloud and his family in their own carriage, a large carry-all or ambulance. He had been to call upon us with some of his squaws and children. He alighted and greeted us good-humoredly, shook hands all round, and said "How? Kola?" to each. He is a big, middle-aged Indian, with rather a good face, and was dressed

in a blue flannel shirt and trousers, blue blanket, and black felt hat with an eagle's feather. He is of larger, heavier build than most of the Indians, who do not appear very tall or muscular, especially the young ones. They are wiry and agile, but it is probable a white man of active habits would be more than a match for an Indian. Captain S—— told us that he had a hand-to-hand tussle with one of them soon after the war, when he was still weakened by long confinement in Southern prisons. Having dropped his pistol in falling down hill, an Indian rushed out at him, but he managed to hold the savage and prevent his using his knife till a soldier came up to help him.

The first ball ever given at Camp Robinson was in our honor, and a very

bright little party it was. As no building of any kind existed in camp, and the weather was dry and fine, a large space of ground was covered with canvas pegged down, and that was our ball-room. The bower of pine branches made an excellent supper-room, the tents of course were our dressing-rooms, and the orchestra consisted of two fiddles. What though they gave but a weak, uncertain sound in the vast spaces of the desert? What though the figures were of a kind unknown before? What if some splendid Chinese lanterns made of newspapers were our grandest illumination? We had the full moon pouring her yellow light over us, and who has not seen the moonlight of the desert knows not what that planet can do.

Our supper consisted of "sang-

widges," biscuits, and a salad composed of something mysterious and horrible, —"big medicine" probably, as this was Indian land. But was there not plenty of coffee, claret-cup, and champagne? The temperature was perfect, the traders and their wives honored us with their presence, and the ball at Red Cloud was a grand success.

At last the Sun Dance was announced. The great medicine pole was erected, crowds of Indians were arriving, and we went to their camp on the morning of July 28 to see the show. The camp was a large one, covering a great space, with hundreds of tepees or tents and thousands of Sioux. Great herds of ponies of every color were feeding outside. The Indians were said to be unarmed, and our officers were requested

to be so. Of course all had pistols, and we saw plenty of bows, knives, and tomahawks in the camp, and muskets too,—loaded only with powder perhaps, but there was a great popping of that. The soldiers were not allowed to be present at the dance. The camp was a new and singular scene, with its vast number of tall conical tents arranged in an irregular circle, its gayly-dressed crowds, its savage life and motion. Each tent had its soup-kettle, where the little, plump, smooth-skinned dogs of a peculiar breed, which they raise for the table, were supposed to be boiling, and each had its medicine pole crowned with a bundle of gay rags and red and blue streamers. Inside the bundle was something sacred, supposed to be the entrails of animals, a sort of charm or fetich to

preserve from evil. Some of us had a fancy to taste the dog soup, which smelt quite savory, but none was offered us. Our first visit was to the tepee of old Red Cloud, for of course we must return his call. It was large and high, twenty feet in diameter at least, conical, and shaped like a Sibley tent. Around the inside edge was arranged the family wardrobe, neatly folded and laid away in handsomely-painted bags of dressed skins, which are their Saratoga trunks. Next these we sat, upon beautiful blankets and skins spread on the ground. There were twenty or thirty of our party, men, women, and children, and nearer the door six or eight chiefs with several squaws and an interpreter. There were Red Cloud, Red Leaf, Red Dog, Sitting Bull, and Spotted Tail.

All were handsomely dressed except Spotted Tail, a fat, villanous-looking old fellow in a dirty brown calico shirt and a shabby blanket. On inquiring the reason we were told he was in mourning. Yet he had no crape, jet beads, or mourning jewelry,—not even a black-edged pocket-handkerchief!

A little conversation took place through the interpreter; a speech was requested from Red Cloud, but he bowed, smiled, looked foolish, and declined. None of the other chiefs would speak. We were getting rather bored when some one proposed that we should sing. A motley company, representing East, West, North, and South, Union soldiers, Mosby's ex-guerillas, belles and babies, we all joined in the "Lord's songs in that strange land," and sang

"Tramp! tramp!" "John Brown," the "Star-Spangled Banner," "Sweet Home," and everything else we could think of. It was not easy to tell whether those impassible savages liked the music or not, but they smiled and looked pleased, and a crowd came round the outside of the tent to listen. It is not likely that any part-singing had ever been heard in that camp before.

After presenting our gifts we paid a short visit to Red Dog in his tepee, and then proceeded to the great medicine booth, where the Sun Dance was to take place. This was a very large circular wigwam, with an open space in the middle,—the rude germ of an amphitheatre. In the centre was a tall medicine pole with gay streamers and its usual queer, mysterious bundle. Crowds

on foot and on horseback were gathered within and without and were pouring in pell-mell, so that we did not see how we were going to get in, till Red Cloud, coming up, knocked them to the right and left and took us to our "reserved seats,"—that is to say, gave us standing-room close by the big deafening drum. Room it could not be called, for we were constantly elbowed by the greasy crowd. An old crier called Linen Foot kept calling something in a loud, sing-song tone. Braves were rushing in, mounted and on foot, shouting, firing off their pieces, and making a diabolical noise; like demons too they looked, with little clothing and painted in the most grotesque manner. Some had green faces, red breasts, and horned buffaloes' heads on top of their own;

some had one blue leg and one yellow one, red foreheads, and green chins; others of the favorite rhubarb color were touched up "tastily" with red and yellow ochre. No horrible combination of colors could be thought of that was not there, and with their splendid war-bonnets, furs, and embroideries the effect was like a circular bed of gaudy flowers. Behind us the big drum was making a fiendish din, and the singing, shrieking, and yelling went on without end, while one creature with head covered—whether man or woman we could not tell—was howling a requiem for the dead.

They danced, not in circles, but in rows up and down, with the usual step and chant. Sometimes they would call out "Hi! hi! hi!" as the savages of

New York do. When one party was tired they would stand aside and others would come in, or a circle of mounted Indians would ride round the pole. Some of these were very brilliant chiefs, and among them Sitting Bull—who came proudly in on a beautiful American blood-horse (a black), with shining arms and trappings of gorgeous colors, and his war-bonnet of feathers trailing on the ground—was an apparition never to be forgotten. One young man on foot, who was painted all over yellow ochre, with imitation wounds upon his breast and body, was so handsome, statuesque, and graceful that it was impossible to believe he could be a full-blooded Indian. His profile was faultless, but his full face, a little flattened, showed Indian blood. Many half-breeds

live among the savages and follow their customs, and this man was probably one of them. A parchment figure of a man about eight or ten inches long, a sort of "paper doll," painted and with a little scalp-lock on its head, lay near the pole, and the Indians stamped on it as they passed and struck it viciously with the butts of their muskets. We were told that it was an emblem of their enemies, and that at first it was put at the top of the pole and shot down with arrows. It was, however, *white.*

It is the custom for these Indians to give presents to one another at this dance. One squaw rushed forward with a shawl and threw it at the feet of one of the braves, and another squaw ran in and took it away. The chiefs bestowed sticks quite freely upon the

braves, and every one who had a stick could choose a pony for himself. It is said that when a chief goes into mourning he gives away a large number of his horses and then makes war to steal some more. The vendetta is a custom among the Indians, with this difference, that if they cannot slay the offender, they kill some one else, red or white. The manes of the dead must be appeased by slaughter.

After looking on for a couple of hours in the stifling heat and choking dust at this strange scene we left the dance, which was still going on; having laid our gifts at the foot of the medicine pole. This first day was a sort of dance of consecration: the real ceremonies were to come off next day, when the braves torture themselves to see

which can endure the most, and the hair of the children is cut and their ears slit on arriving at a certain age. It is not likely that we could have borne to see much of this, but we wished—some of us—to have a glimpse of the horror. It was decided, however, that our departure from Red Cloud could be no longer delayed, and what we had already seen must suffice. After a night of intensely brilliant moonlight and roaring wind we set off for Spotted Tail agency, still farther in the wilderness. Going down the long valley we had all day the butte in sight, of which the following legend is told: A party of Sioux had driven the Crows to take refuge on the top of this butte and encamped round its base, sure that they "had 'em." But, lo! in the morning

the Crows were gone, having let themselves down, like eloping nuns, by ropes made of their blankets, over the sheer cliff, and slipped away by well-known paths across the mountains. A similar story is related of many other buttes. The country became every hour more barren as we went on in a north-easterly direction till all was desolation. We passed the remains of the "Old Agency," where the ground was strewed for miles with the bones and skulls of slaughtered cattle. The Indians always encamp near the agencies, and in time make the place uninhabitable; so, as there is plenty of room, a removal occurs.

Passing a low hill called Trunk Butte, we camped on Chadron Creek about 2 P.M., just as a short, sharp hail-storm passed over us. A number of Indians

came into camp, who appeared to be straggling about the Plains or going to the Sun Dance. They got up a horse-race with the soldiers, but as neither side ran fair it amounted to nothing. Yet the Arab-like scene in the red sunset, with the crowd of Indians and soldiers, was a good one. These Indians were wild-looking fellows, quite ready to steal or beg the remains of our dinner. The night deepened, moon and stars came out, the night-hawks flew about on noiseless wings, uttering strange cries: all else was silent. The Indians stole away to their camps, hidden among the folds of the hills, and we kindled the great fire and sat in its glow, talking and telling stories. The war, too soon forgotten, lived again for us that night. Captain S—— told us wild tales of his

escapes from rebel prisons and of the horrors of Libby and Andersonville. We have all heard these tales, but how much more real was the simple matter-of-fact story of one who had lived through it all! He escaped, in various ways and under various disguises, seven times, each time being retaken, and once, worst of all, when actually within our lines. On the last trial, fortunately, Sherman was near, and he was saved, although a Southern officer sat one day on the bed under which he was concealed and ate the dinner, prepared by a friendly hand, for which he was famishing. How is it possible that the brave men who passed through such things can seem so much like other people as they do? To them it was simply duty, simply living: they went

on from hour to hour doing what came to hand. Nothing ever seems very strange while it is happening, and to one who is always ready for action, action seems an every-day affair. But while all the bitterness and wrath of that time should pass away, while all its anger should be forgotten, let us not forget its lessons, nor yet those whose heroism won us the day,—the living and the dead.

Rising next morning at break of day we heard the doves answering one another from the thicket,—the loveliest, loneliest of tones, like the clear, soft sound of a delicate bell. It reminded us of the German fable that the campanulas ring chimes for the fairies, though only a Sunday child may hear them. Our little camp was soon alive

and ready for an early start. The plan was to leave our whole outfit upon Chadron Creek under guard, and to go on in light-marching order to Spotted Tail, returning at night to camp. With our three ambulances and an escort of twelve horse we went rapidly down the White River under a scorching sun and over a more dreary country than ever. Trees totally disappeared, the bluffs flattened out into hillocks; dust to dust, ashes to ashes: alkali reigned over all. The river ran a muddy white, the sky was white, the earth was white, and we soon became white too. Sometimes, however, these Bad Lands assumed a singular and interesting appearance, water-worn into gulches and cañons below the surface of the plains, and simulating the appearance of great snow-banks and

fluted glaciers, whose white and gray forms had a certain beauty of their own. Wherever there is light and shadow there are the elements of beauty, the germs, at least, of color, and over this unreal snow pale tints of rose and delicate green hovered and imitated faintly the hues of the Mer de Glace.

A rapid drive of about two hours brought us to Spotted Tail agency, passing by the Indian camp about five miles distant, where a thin belt of timber marked the course of Bordeaux Creek. The camp and agency of Spotted Tail stand in as dreary a plain, perhaps, as can be found on the globe, seeming more like the dismal planets we read of than our pleasant gay green earth. Not a shrub broke the alkaline monotony, and we pitied the poor fel-

lows who had to live there separated from their families and all that is bright and pleasant. Here were gentlemen and scholars eating, drinking, breathing alkali and grasshoppers, without opera, lectures, Theodore Thomas, or anything that makes life tolerable. We sat under bowers of dead pine boughs with all the music dried out of them, and endured the suffocating heat as well as we could. All that was possible was done for us: an elegant luncheon was spread, with everything nice that could come out of cans, and the poor fellows showed us fossils. Alas! they had nothing alive, not a blade of grass. Everything was dead, and had been dead a long time,—several ages, to say the least. All people on the Plains keep fossils, and show

you with pride the thigh-bone of a mammoth, a slice of cold fish, or a heap of ammonites. Something of to-day would have been better, but in that country there is no to-day, nothing "recent." One officer had quite a collection of dead insects and birds, but how insects and birds had ever lived there I could not see. But the grasshoppers! They must not be forgotten, for they were "like grasshoppers for multitude," and at every step we raised thousands. Every night there were dozens of the most "bumptious" kind in our tents, and we shouted with laughter at their antics.

At three we went back to camp again, bidding good-by with regret to our agreeable hosts, and leaving them to their loneliness, their heat, and their

alkali. We were the first ladies that had ever paid them a visit, and it may be long before they see any more. Fortunately, the sun was now obscured: great black clouds were marching across the country, and by and by the storm struck us with rolling columns of dust and a few drops of rain. Then it swept grandly on, and we arrived just after nightfall at our camp at Chadron. It is strange how soon one becomes at home in a camp! We felt as if we had lived there a week and were coming back to a familiar place.

The news had reached us that the Indians were in a bad humor, having heard some exaggerated accounts of General Custer's doings in the Black Hills, and had refused to allow any whites to see the last ceremonies of the

Sun Dance. An Indian who lived near by, and had been hanging about the camp for what he could get, came that night and talked a great deal about the danger we were in. Sergeant J——, who had been long on the Plains and knew a little of the Indian tongue, undertook to pump him and find out if he really knew anything. As we suspected, he had only heard some idle rumors. The group was a good one. The Indian, a tall, fine-looking specimen of his race, in blue blanket and red paint, squatted upon his moccasined heels and looked shrewd and keen, while our sergeant, also tall, slender, and handsome, was squatted in the same manner opposite, and searched the impassive face of the savage with his clear blue eyes. Two more alert-looking speci-

mens of the races could hardly have been found, but we thought that in a tussle the hardy, supple Indian would scarcely be a match for the sinewy young veteran of the Plains. Around them stood the officers, booted and spurred, fair-haired, graceful girls, matrons and children, blonde and brunette, a squaw or two with flat painted faces, and the tents and camp-equipage in the background. The scene was Homeric, for "Greek met Greek," and a war of words ensued. The Indian "talked big." He said "his people were marching down from the Black Hills in great wrath: they were but two sleeps behind us. General Custer had massacred a whole village; his men had murdered a chief named Stabber. We had better depart or we should all

be killed. Our squaws and children, no kill: soldiers no like." The officers laughed at his talk: they had often heard the like before; but as we were going back to Red Cloud next morning it did not concern us much. The noble savage ended, as usual, by begging. He had a little round button at the top of his head, which looked as if a picture-nail had been driven straight into his skull. How it was fastened on was one of the "mysteries of life."

Next morning we departed for Red Cloud, arriving there on the evening of the 31st. A gay crowd of Indians were at the agency, for it was "issue day," when rations are given out. The squaws shouldered the heavy burdens, and all went off along the trails towards their camps. This is a very

populous neighborhood, yet it would hardly be suspected. Their tents are concealed among the hills, and in looking over the country you see nothing of them. Yet little parties are constantly met going about, for they spend much time in visiting, gossiping, feasting, drumming, and dancing. An Indian trail is usually a double track, made by the tent-poles, which, fastened on each side of the ponies, wear an uneven, wriggling path.

We were sorry to leave Red Cloud, where we had found true friendliness, hospitality, and all the amenities of life, and the wild nature among these lonely hills, which some would think so dreary, had for us a charm that could not pass away. Again we wound up the White River to its sources, among the bowers

of branches and thickets of clematis and wild cucumber, rejoicing once more in the trees as we watched the soldiers dashing after deer or halting at the springs. It was very fascinating, though not considered quite safe, to walk ahead of the party during a halt, until, all being out of sight behind the endless waves of land, we felt all alone in the wide world. On one of these walks we "lifted up our eyes and beheld a great company," the weekly mail- and supply-train, thirty wagons with an escort of thirty horse,—a fine sight as they wound up and down the undulating space. And then and there the mail was robbed, and we read letters from dear friends, warm words of love at the world's end, and seemed to hear the roar of Atlantic

waves as we stood on that ocean of the Plains.

Thus on, till in the afternoon our tents were "pight" on Running Water again and we sat by the camp-fire in peace. Our excellent commissariat was always a source of wonder to us. If it ever occurred to us that Jeff, the black cook, might have had a little more imagination, and might have improvised more variety from the excellent materials he had, why, he was born without genius, and that was not the fault of our admirable commanding officer. Jeff was a darky who knew a hundred games of cards and only one soup. Gambling was his business, sleep his recreation, cooking his last resort when there were no more silver watches to be won. But his grins

and his orange neckerchief were a joy forever.

We found the cache of forage we left on the Niobrara had been opened and pre-*emptied*. So much the more reason for hastening back to Laramie. The same route, the same country, cool breezes, glorious mornings, sunsets, grasshoppers, gophers, prairie-dogs, camp-life again, till, crossing the Platte, we saw the ugly, friendly old buildings of the post. We were entertained this time at the cavalry camp, where the officers gave up their comfortable tents for our use. The money-bag, once plump with one hundred thousand dollars in greenbacks, was now shrunken, wrinkled, and melancholy. Not so we. Business first and pleasure afterwards. The business trip was over: now we were to have

the *bonne bouche* of the whole affair, a picnic of a week among the untrodden wilds of Laramie Peak.

On the 5th of August we were off in high spirits for the woods. Some gay young officers commanded the escort, and the whole party (except those under ten) left at least ten years behind them. Colonel S—— (our kind host) and his family, with the same ladies as before, composed the party, with the addition of an English artist. Our first day's journey was like many others, with this difference, that we were always approaching the peak, which grew every moment more beautiful and distinct. It reminded us in form and color of the Alban Mount, and the country was not unlike the Roman Campagna. Our first camp was on

Cottonwood Creek, but higher up than where we had struck it before in going to Fort Fetterman. The stream rises in the Laramie range, and our route lay up its valley. At sunset the mountain shone for us with wonderful colors, —campanula, periwinkle, and forget-me-not,—deepening with twilight to purple and brown. With the morning light we were off again, up the charming wild valley following the deer-tracks among the trees. The peak was dark and angry with cloud-shadows, little sprinkling showers passed over us with rainbows, then deep blue sky prevailed. We thought we had seen blue sky before, but there is none like this that crowns the cañons of the Rockies. Sometimes even our exquisite turquoise is opaque, but here the dark depths

were boundless. The valley became a gorge; we crossed the wild little stream constantly, following the dim trail; the rocks grew higher and bolder every moment, bristling with chimneys and needles. Away into the heart of the Rockies we go, and well may they be called so, for they are the rockiest kind of rocks. The road becomes bad, becomes none; we tumble, we stick, we pull, but we do not break down. The four black mules are stanch, now that they are put upon their mettle. Lovely and bowery are the reaches of the brook; above, the pitch-pines clothe the hill-sides where they can find standing-room, but most is crag and precipice cutting the sky. Now in the damp places we find willow, cottonwood, kinnikinnic; now the cañon opens a

little and leaves space for green grass and lovely flowers, blazing golden composites, blue gentians, and the exquisite lungwort. A glimpse of the peak far above tells us how near we are to our goal. At two o'clock we emerge from a thick pine grove scattered with boulders; the valley widens, and we find the deserted saw-mill and cabins near which Lieutenant Robinson and a sergeant were murdered by the Indians only last February. Once this little valley under the peak was a busy scene; now it is as silent as the grave. It seems as if we could touch the mountain, so clear is the atmosphere: every rift and seam and jag of its rough outline is as sharply visible as the teeth of a broken saw. Over comes a black cloud that interrupts the eating of

bread and jam and the making of claret-cup that usually accompany a halt. Tents are pitched in a hurry and we hasten to shelter. The shower over, we enjoy this Swiss scene, with the mill and huts for chalets. There is everything in this magic valley: we have but to wish, and here is an ice-house filled last winter under orders of Lieutenant Robinson. How strange that we should have come thousands of miles to drink his punch, poor fellow! Out came the sun, the peak streamed and glistened with rain, the grass shone, and the clouds rolled rapidly away.

In the night we had our first experience of a grand mountain-storm. Actually in the very heart of the electric tempest, we were bathed with-

out ceasing in floods of lightning, crimson, orange, and white; the thunder never ceased roaring and crashing; the rain came down in cataracts; mountain and forest were illumined with the intense flashes to their innermost nooks. But we went to sleep in the middle of it, and awoke next morning to see a true Alpen-glow burning upon the summit of the peak. The light fell lower and lower, till the whole mountain shone with the rose light, and at last the sun appeared over the opposite hill, and it was full day.

We breakfasted on grouse, which were plenty, and went on at 6 A.M. of a perfect morning, hearing shots often from our hunting-parties, who were out on all sides. After a short march of a few hours we turned suddenly into

another little valley, where bold cliffs shadowed another little stream, the north fork of the Laramie. A bear was brought in, killed by Lieutenant F——, and we had some of the meat for dinner, with the delicate Rocky Mountain pheasant or blue grouse. We rambled about, bathed in the clear stream, where we found numbers of the curious little gravel houses of the caddis-worm, and napped away part of the long afternoon. Some one discovered a great excrescence in a pine-tree, a singular freak of nature, oddly woven of matted twigs and as large as a hogshead. The children climbed the cliffs and shouted from above. Then the great roaring camp-fire was kindled as usual, and songs and stories ushered in the thick bright stars.

In the morning we left the North Laramie fork and entered another nameless cañon, with its own cliffs and pines, where we killed our first rattlesnake. We thought we had seen grasshoppers, but in these valleys were THE grasshoppers,—millions to every square inch, flying above the trees in clouds, dimming the light of the sun. Of course there are no roads in these gorges, where none but hunters and scouts have ever been, and we pitch about like a ship in a storm, stopping sometimes to have big rocks rolled out of our way. No ladies have ever entered these cañons before. "We are the first that ever burst into this silent" vale. Ah! this *is* the wilderness, the real thing! These passes are untouched virgin soil, unspoiled

by tourists and advertisements of hair-dye.

Here the noble pitch-pine is the only tree,—not an ornamental tree, but beautiful with its ragged outlines, its deep-green boughs, and its trunk as red as an Indian's,—beautiful in the wilderness where it belongs, under the rosy cliffs, the purple sky, beside the yellow grass. Now we peep into little side-cañons, wild nooks that charm us with their utter solitude; now we must "light out" and walk, the trail is a little too bad. A turn in the road hides the party; we are truly alone. The noise of the grasshoppers is like a strong rushing wind. Under the shadow of a great rock we find the first ferns we have seen in all this broad dry land.

Still upward! We have flanked the

Laramie range, and are on the west side of it, and now we have reached the summit of the pass, the great table-land of Laramie Plains, a wide, lonely mesa, a favorite range for antelope, deer, and hunters. Having crossed the Rockies, the next thing we have to do is to go southward till we strike the Laramie River and return eastward down its valley. Here, as on all heights of land, there is a little pond, and it is circled with blue gentians, grass of Parnassus, and the small white stars of the water-ranunculus. Herds of antelopes fly before us, badgers and other little beasts run about, and shots echo among the hills. The fine range of the peak is behind, and before us noble nameless mountains, split and battlemented. And now our route

turns, and we leave the plain and rapidly descend into a stony valley. It is a steep, breakneck tumble, but we get down safely. Here we find two of our men, lost the day before. They report having seen a mountain-sheep—very rare now—within shot after they had spent their ammunition.

Soon we enter a glen wilder than any we have seen before, called Collins's Cut-off. Whoever Collins was, he had a great taste in "cut-offs." So savage, so narrow was the gorge that it had hardly any bottom, and began its steep slope close to the edge of its tiny stream. Above, high rocks towered in broken cliffs thousands of feet. Pine groves filled the glen, lifting high in the air their wind-tossed, rugged branches. Great boulders lay tumbled about, and

dogwood, osiers, and the graceful mountain-maple hid the stream. We found a lovely new flower, a white cup with exquisite tints of green at the bottom. It is called wild tulip here. At sunset we climbed one of the great hills that shut us in and beheld a crimson sky, a tumbled confusion of mountain-peaks interlocked in a grand maze, and beyond the dear old Plains for fifty miles bathed in a flood of rosy light. The vision faded, and while we stumbled down it became nearly dark, and the camp-fires were shining below among the pines. So mysterious and strange looked the groups around them that they might have been taken for banditti among the Apennines or guerilleros in the Pyrenees instead of a peaceful Yankee picnic. We sat very late

that night by the camp-fire, almost till ten o'clock, enjoying songs, recitals, Hardshell Baptist sermons, and all sorts of nonsense. The night was soft and mild, great stars peeped through the pines, owls hooted and wolves howled in the dark woods close by.

On Sunday morning, August 9, we were allowed a nap after the Alpenglow, an unusual luxury, and we went to sleep with the happy thought that we were to stay all day in this lovely place. Some one had been here before, for there was a rude hut, said to have been a haunt of horse-thieves,—a mere shelter, but built by the hand of man. Breakfast is over; our hammocks are slung among the fragrant pines; all are busy, drawing, chatting, reading, napping, as if we had lived here always.

The children skip about among the rocks, the little camp is full of life and color. There is just room for us here, and no more. The soldiers' camp is pitched on the other side of the stream: ours is on a side-hill, and we sleep slopingly. A good place this would be for that species of wild-cat said to exist in the Rocky Mountains, which has the legs on one side shorter than those on the other, being fitted by natural selection for running on hill-sides. No specimen of this interesting beast could be obtained: it has become very scarce. Three parties of soldiers have gone out hunting: we ought to have plenty of game for our Sunday dinner. Now we hear shouting above: "Got a big deer! Come up, two or three, and help." Soon they come, half tumbling down

the cliff, with a black-tailed buck, considered the best venison, the next best game to mountain-sheep. The second party bring in antelope; the third, nothing, which insures them much chaffing. Our Sunday's dinner was indeed excellent: courses of bear, deer, and antelope followed each other, corks popped, and jokes and stories sparkled.

As night comes on and the fires are lighted the effect is magical of splendor upon darkness: the red trunks and dead and green branches stand out brilliantly, and everything tells. Across the brook, in the soldiers' bivouac, white tents are gleaming, horses and mules are picketed, groups with long shadows are sitting in the firelight, game and skins are hanging in the trees, shining arms are piled, and camp-kettles hang

gypsy-like upon three sticks. Our fire is a grand one, and lights up the forest for a great distance. There is no lack of fuel in our "perpendicular wood-pile;" the children bring apronsful of fragrant cones; we heap on great branches, watching carefully that the flames do not spread and burn the woods. Sometimes on a windy night the fire suddenly leaps out, and tents, wagons, baggage, and all are consumed, and lives are in danger. Ladies have been thus left in the wilderness with nothing to wear, and have been obliged to borrow the soldiers' trousers or make petticoats of corn-sacks. Most people have something of the gypsy latent within them, but few have such a chance as this to let it out. Nor do many civilians see military life in its

out-door aspect of the camp and the bivouac, which is its really fresh and charming side. Surely, if most of our army resemble those with whom we had to do, a more manly, brave, and courteous set of men do not exist. We were proud of them as countrymen. They are far from being the lazy hangers-on at barracks that Eastern people are apt to imagine. Life to them is active, full of adventure, sometimes of danger; they learn to endure cold, fatigue, hardship; they become shrewd, alert, "shifty." They must bear separation from their families and friends, from the world of science, literature, or amusement. Their bodies may lie frozen or massacred in the wilderness. Yet, in spite of not a little grumbling, they seem to like their life;

and no wonder, for it is real, and with all its drawbacks it is fascinating to many. Colonel S—— loves these desert plains, over which he has to journey every two months in scorching heat or bitter cold, and would hardly change their freedom for the refinements and conventionalities of an Eastern city. As for the Indian question, we refrain from the discussion, as everybody at the East has an opinion ready formed upon the subject.

We were drawn away from our own camp-fire by the sound of the soldiers' singing, and we sat listening long in silence. There were some fine voices among them, and as they sang that most pathetic of war-songs, the "Old Camp-ground," the effect was wonderful in that solitary place. The singers were hidden

from view, but their fire flickered upon their tents and lighted up the black, solemn wood,—a fitting scene for the music. How we felt as that tender old song rolled out of the darkness! How we thought of those old camp-grounds, where now the violets grow and the kind hand of Nature has effaced the marks of blood,—the old camp-grounds of the war! Ah, let us not forget those fields where we had so much at stake, nor those who died to keep them free. Other fine old war-songs followed, then sentimental ballads, a charming German love-song, new to us: some one recited "Hans Breitmann's Ride" with great effect in good dialect, and some comic negro songs followed. But we had the "Old Camp-ground" repeated before we went away, and none of us will ever forget it.

Next morning the principal singer and speaker was pointed out to us,—a dark, handsome fellow, who looked in his sombrero like Fra Diavolo. "Mighty clever, but always in the guard-house:" this was the character they gave him. Plenty of talent is hidden away among the privates of our army, poor fellows! who cannot abjure the bottle or the dice, and are "always in the guard-house"—some of them men of good family and education, but forgotten and forgetting. We were told of one who made exquisite carvings out of the white clay; of others who were artists, actors, and musicians in these distant posts.

Our next camp was only seven miles off, for we lingered in the mountains. A small party of us walked the short distance through the fine cañons, where

the high crags fringed with pines touched the blue, constantly crossing the brooks, and finding old friends among the willows, monkshood, painted cup, and dogsbane. Every moment the view changed: new mountains and valleys opened before us. It was a lovely walk, but our commanding officer did not think it quite safe, and we refrained from these rambles afterwards.

Again in camp, August 11, in a sweet green valley, with pine-covered hills and one big mountain looking at us over their tops. A pretty spring was here with its bottom glittering with golden pyrites. Ah! if all that glitters were gold! A wild wind was sounding in the pines, the sky was bluer than blue, with great white clouds. As soon as we "lit out," the time being still

early forenoon, Jeff, the black cook, immediately went to sleep, the dinner evidently not weighing heavily upon his mind. Whereupon a mischievous young officer fired a pistol close to his ear. The effect was comic. He started up, pale and dusky with fear; the whites of his eyes grew as large as tea-cups, and he stood bewildered a long time amid our shouts of laughter. Lulled by the pines, I too fell asleep, and was wakened by little L——, who was calling to me, "Oh, mamma, do be frightened!" A mountain-gale, almost a hurricane, was blowing, and as I sat in my tent dressing for dinner, first the stove-pipe in the cook-tent began to sway to and fro; then down came tent, stove-pipe, and all, and Jeff and the dinner were buried in the ruins. The colonel

rushed to the rescue and held up the stovepipe, and while I was wondering if he would continue to hold up that pipe till the dinner was cooked, lo! the wind increased and blew yet higher. Rip! tear! went the tent over my head, and I was buried under a heap of canvas, and obliged to crawl out in a "rather mixed" state, hair flying, brush and comb in hand, and take refuge in the ambulance, where I made shift to finish my toilet, laughed at by all the camp. The ambulance did not quite blow over, but it shook like a leaf. Looking up at the big mountain that shut us in, its top was wild with great windy, snowy clouds, from which blew an icy current; turning to the other side, all the tents were going down like so many bubbles. Down went the dining-tent

over table and cookery, and the question of dinner became an anxious one. But, though the soup was burnt, the dinner was cooked somehow, and we ladies sat in the ambulance and were fed by the officers, who went to and fro like mother-birds, bearing venison, vegetables, and dessert. The dinner was all the more jolly for the mishap. There was a joke for every mouthful, and how it happened that we were not choked is a mystery. All was merry that day in the old 'bus. The gale subsided, the clouds drove away in a wild chase, and vanished over the Plains, leaving the open country before us as we looked down the gorge. Up went the tents again, and a cool starlit night followed, the wind still roaring and the fire flickering.

Next morning we breakfasted on the grass, and then walked a little way down the valley in the pure mountain-air that ran through the blood like wine. Dark-blue jays with black crests were flitting among the trees, screaming harshly: more familiar robins and chickadees sang and pursued the clouds of grasshoppers. The fantastic cliffs still stood on either side as we ran down rapidly, till rocks became hills, and a long, dreary, moraine-like embankment hemmed us in. If this were not the bed of an extinct glacier, there is no use in the glacial theory. A softer bed might well be found. We jolted along till we cried for mercy, but it was of no use: on we must, over rough or smooth. As we looked back the whole range came more and more superbly

into view, with all its array of pinnacles and teeth, the great dome of Laramie lifting itself over all like a wing. Still down, over stock and stone, crossing little divides and streams, till we came to camp about noon on a pretty spot near the forks of the Laramie, and were on the Plains once more. We crossed the clear rapid river, and encamped on the other side among long grass and cottonwood. Backward, the dear old peak was beautiful as ever, clearly defined and full of soft shadows of the clouds floating over it. The river ran swiftly in the foreground, fringed with lovely trees, and just where it ought to have stood to complete the picture was a large hay-wagon, with white mules and men with red shirts. We had come back to civiliza-

tion again. The clouds grew rosy and deepened to flame, dark violet tinted the mountain, and we lingered till the last yellow light flashed up from the horizon and our last camp-fire was lighted. Our picnic would soon be over. We felt a little sad, and did not sing much that night. Though it was a capital night for sleeping, we observed that the straw in our beds had been slowly but surely diminishing for some time, and was now reduced to the last straw that broke the camel's back. The burs in this camp were numerous and varied, and so were the grasshoppers.

In the morning we walked, always looking back at the peak. How we had learned to love that mountain in all its aspects of sun and storm! How we had studied every fold in its garment,

every seam in its brow, every outline of its summit! How happy we had been in its wild cañons! How loath we were to leave it! "Bless the Lord for the mountains!" says the old Swiss proverb.

Jeff now began to assume a hoary appearance, which was mysterious at first, but we soon discovered that he had carefully prepared the grease of "that bear," and used it to anoint his locks, and now that we were upon the road again the white dust clung to them obstinately, giving him a look of premature old age. This was the first time that bear's grease was ever known to be made from a real bear. The day's ride was lovely, in a perfect atmosphere, following all the time the charming valley of the Laramie, and crossing the river nine times. The scene as we

forded the stream and mounted the opposite bank was always pretty. It is indeed the most attractive and fertile valley we have seen, and containing many prosperous ranches protected by the fort. The river winds and loops about over a wide intervale, bordered with yellow bluffs where shadows lie softly, and in the great bends the cattle find rich pasture. About noon we arrived at Kauffe's ranch, a house of entertainment, where we found a dozen officers and their wives who had come to meet us, and soon after we entered the old fort and felt at home again. We were quartered in the prettiest,—the only pretty barracks in the post, where the river fled swiftly by, and we looked out through blossoming morning-glories upon its clear current. Flowers are

very precious in this country: it is next to impossible to have any; they are nursed like invalids. These quarters were called "Saints' Rest,"—a row of buildings on the very edge of the river,—the saints being gay young bachelors. The rooms were comfortable, but they seemed close and confined after camping out so long, and we missed the rose-bushes, pine-cones, and grasshoppers.

In the morning we bade farewell to the kind friends and the hospitable fort, and to all the life at Laramie; heard the band for the last time, and went our way over the hot, dry country, where the grasshoppers had devoured all and drought had eaten up the rest. Passing Chug Springs and the Chug-water, where there was almost no water at all, we arrived at Kelly's ranch once

more. How tame everything looked now compared with its aspect five weeks ago, when it was our first taste of wild life! We took another peep at the "one little, two little, three little Indians" of assorted sizes asleep in a row out of doors; we said good-by to the turtle and the seal. Everything looked the same,—the bluffs, the stream, the desert,—but we were not the same: we had gained a rich and varied experience. This was our last camp: soon we must all part and go our several ways. Dusty, tanned, and shabby we return, but well and happy. There is not a headache in a thousand miles of the air we have been breathing for a month past.

The next day's ride seemed dull, for it was our last, and soon we arrived once more at the good little homely town

of Cheyenne. What could have been more successful than our trip? The weather was delicious, save a few torrid days, the commissariat faultless, the kindness unfailing, the good-temper complete. Nothing went wrong. If there were any annoyances they were carefully concealed from us. It is impossible to impart the fine aroma of our camp-life to others, but we have it bottled up to keep forever. The skies of Laramie will be always blue, its pines ever green in our memories. And forever will rest there the thoughtful kindness of our colonel, the devotion of our lieutenants and captains, the fun of Camp Robinson, the jolly luncheon of Spotted Tail, the friendly faces at Fetterman, and the Sunday in Collins's Cut-off. If I remember not thee, O

Laramie, may my right hand forget her cunning! if I remember not thee, thy plains, thy river, and thy pleasant old fort, may I never ride in an ambulance again!

THE END.